

[Copy of aerogram,
in Burma the letter
perhaps do not arrive]

I

Dear Daw Khin Mya,

Oct. 14, '75.

I wrote to Richard Paw U, asking him to think of your daughter if anything comes free at U.N.D.P. I will be very happy if she passes her exam and will find a job. However, it depends on her vipāka. We think that we can organise our lives and do this and that and it causes us great worry. Our life is only nāmas and rūpas which arise when there are the conditions for their arising. We have one day gain, another loss, one day praise, another day blame (does it not happen in your work too?), honour and dishonour, wellbeing and misery, these are the "lokadhamma". We cannot force kusala vipāka to arise, but if your daughter is intent on kusala all the time and is interested in the Dhamma, don't worry about her. Conditions will be in such a way that she will be all right in life. We must have great confidence in kusala, like your husband always had in his life. I think he never complained about his illness and thought only of working hard at kusala, because he never said a word to me about his illness.

You said you experience the arising and falling away of the five khandhas. Let us consider some examples from daily life. There is cold appearing, just cold. No need to think that it is the cold of the fan or cold water, or your hand which is cold. Cold is only cold, no thing in the coldness, no person in the coldness. Can it be experienced? And there is also the experience of cold, a reality which experiences the cold, no you who experiences the cold, no person. The reality which experiences the cold cannot see, cannot hear, can only experience the cold. Is it necessary to think of what khandha it is? Certainly it is khandhā, but the meaning of khandhas is: they include all conditioned nāmas and rūpas, it is a way the Boeddha explained realities.

Can the arising and falling away of cold, or of the reality which experiences cold really be experienced by paññā, or is it thinking? When a reality appears do we have to think of arising and falling away? That is just thinking, not awareness. We should know the difference. While we think: it falls away, the reality at that moment is thinking and it covers up the truth of the characteristic at that moment. We should know the difference when it is me who thinks, and when it is just the sati arising when there are conditions, sometimes, most often not and it cannot be induced; then there is the idea of self again who wants to be aware. Would you reread about this subject my Book II, about the factors of the eightfold Path?

When there is hearing and then seeing, the hearing has fallen away when there is seeing, but we only know this by thinking, it cannot be paññā yet, because paññā is developed stage by stage. First step is just: know difference between nama and rupa more and more precise, until there is no doubt. We still mix them, put them together, for example hearing and sound seem one mass, seeing and colour seem one mass. How can the falling away exactly, right at that moment, be experienced, of one nama or of one rupa when we do not even have

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if one nāna or of one rūpa when we do not even have the precise knowledge of the, one by one. Impossible.

We can think of impermanence, but that is not yet pañña which realises it right at the right moment. We should know when there is only thinking. I touch the pot on the stove: that is just thinking. The hardness is impermanent, that is just thinking and it does not bring detachment from the self. When hardness is experienced as just hardness, different from the moment you think of the hardness of the pot, you will learn: hardness as only hardness, and the experience of hardness as only the experience of hardness, no you who experiences it, that brings detachment from the self. Then there is sound, or visible object, and thus realities are experienced one by one, as they appear through the doorways. That is all, only that. Do not try anything else, otherwise you may take thinking of impermanence of the khandhas for right awareness, but that is only thinking, still self who thinks. You have great confidence in the teachings, but do not expect a quick result like arahatship. We need a long, long time of developing, because of our many kilesa. —
